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Baptist leaders endorse Personhood

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

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The Christian Action Commission (CAC) of the Mississippi Baptist Convention has endorsed Initiative 26, also known as the Personhood Amendment, that will appear on the Nov. 8 state general election ballot, and is encouraging Mississippi Baptist pastors and church members to support the measure which is expected to meet heavy opposition.

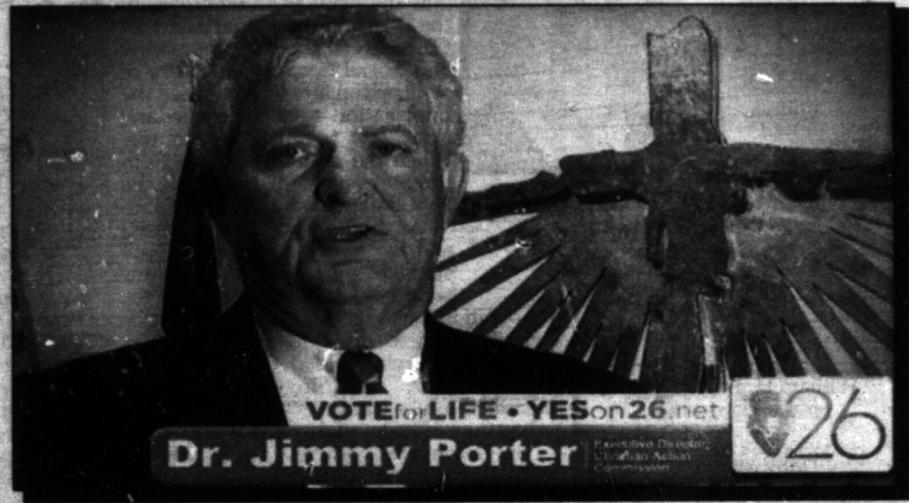
If approved by voters, Initiative 26 will amend the Mississippi Constitution to define human personhood as beginning at the "moment of fertilization or the functional equivalent thereof."

"Human life has a very special place in the creation of God," said Jimmy Porter, CAC executive director, in a video produced for the Yes on 26 campaign. "In fact, the Bible says we are created in the image of God. We are the only ones. God felt that life was very special and values it. The Lord expects us to value life even as He does."

"Let me make it clear that this is not a political issue," Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, wrote in a mailout to Mississippi Baptist pastors. "It is a question of whether the people of Mississippi will go on record saying that the life of a person begins when that life is conceived. It is a moral issue. It is an ethical issue. It is a spiritual issue..."

"This amendment is not just an anti-abortion position, but it is a pro-life position and will state that the people of Mississippi believe unquestionably that when an egg and sperm are united in a mother's womb, the creation that takes place is a new, separate, and unique individual that deserves the right to be protected, loved, and have the opportunity to live out his or her existence."

"Mississippi Baptists can go to the polls, vote 'Yes,' and almost singlehandedly make the right decision. One thing is for sure — if we do nothing, we will miss a choice opportunity for making a decision that will reverberate across our land."



Opponents of the measure have also noticed the importance of the upcoming vote. Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the nation, has joined a newly-incorporated group called Mississippians for Healthy Families that was formed to fight Initiative 26 — even though Planned Parenthood does not have a single clinic or abortion facility in the state.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is one of Planned Parenthood's partners in Mississippians for Healthy Families. The group has hired Mississippi veteran lobbyist Stan Flint to manage the anti-26 campaign and serve as spokesman.

Supporters of Initiative 26 expect a dirty campaign to defeat the measure. Already, a Planned Parenthood chaplain and homosexual activist from Seattle identified himself as a Southern Baptist minister at a public meeting in Tupelo and spoke against the measure. (For documentation, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me0Ur5js-QU>.)

"You have no idea how many millions of dollars will pour into Mississippi to protect abortion," said former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, who was the featured speaker at a Sept. 8 dinner spon-

sored by the Yes on 26 campaign at First Church, Jackson. Huckabee, an ordained Southern Baptist minister, former president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and current FoxNews show host, said, "This is not about women. This is about elevating wealth among those who promote and profit from abortion."

If Initiative 26 is approved, Mississippi will be the first state to constitutionally recognize personhood as beginning at the moment of fertilization. Personhood amendments have made it on to the voters in other states but have failed in balloting. Colorado voters have twice failed to pass a personhood amendment in that state.

Measures similar to Mississippi's Initiative 26 are slated for future elections in other states, including Ohio. Petition drives and other actions to get personhood amendments on ballots are active in several other states.

The wording of Initiative 26 is as follows:

Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Mississippi: SECTION 1. Article III of the constitution of the state of Mississippi is hereby amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION TO READ: Section 33. Person defined. As used in this Article III of the state constitution, "The term 'person' or 'persons' shall include every human being from the moment of fertilization, cloning or the functional equivalent thereof." This initiative shall not require any additional revenue for implementation.

Yes on 26 leaders have urged Mississippians to visit the web site, Yeson26.net, for the latest updates on the campaign, as well as documentation on rumors and misinformation that are expected to be spread by opponents of Initiative 26. Mississippi Baptists can also contact CAC at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: rmcollum@christianaction.com. Web site: www.christianaction.com.

VOTE for LIFE

YES on 26

YES on 26.net

Give
me a
chance.

I am a
person.



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Tragedy as commonplace

Janice Singleton of Jackson had the world on a string. The first in her family to earn a college degree, the ambitious young woman opened a tax preparation business at the age of 22. She worked other jobs, too, to get ahead. She became a role model in the minority community from which she sprang.

The story of how she came to stand before a federal judge in Jackson in 2009 as a convicted felon is, sadly, becoming tragically commonplace in our state.

Singleton pled guilty to fraud and was sentenced to four years and four months in prison. Prosecutors allege that while she was working one of those other jobs she held, as an employee of the Mississippi Department of Corrections, she stole the names and Social Security numbers of state prison inmates and used the information to file false federal and state income tax returns. When the refunds came in from those fraudulent returns, she kept the money for herself.

As her artifice was exposed and the house of cards she built started to crumble, questions were also raised about her tax preparation business. According to some of her clients, there were problems there, too.

The Secret Service raided the business in January 2007, and Singleton allegedly assaulted a television crew the next month when they came to ask her about the raid.

According to news reports, Singleton still faces state charges in Rankin County where she worked for the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

The culture in our state today takes little note of individuals whose lives are wrecked by legalized gambling. As our governor and legislators have indicated over and over, by both word and deed, the

"WELL, I'LL PUT IT THIS WAY—
CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS HAVE
NOT BEEN THE SAME. YOU WERE
A FINANCE CHAIRMAN LIKE NONE
WE'VE EVER SEEN!"



scheme. It is not clear from news reports whether any irregularities at the tax preparation business can be proven.

As Singleton begged for mercy from U.S. District Judge Henry Wingate, she admitted that a gambling problem led her into a life of betrayal and crime. Wingate, justifiably unmoved, issued the prison sentence and also ordered her to pay the Internal Revenue Service and the Mississippi Tax Commission more than \$240,000 in restitution.

Singleton was indicted on 20 counts, including identity theft, fraudulent use of identity, fraud by mail or other means of communication, and fraudulent statements. Prosecutors allege she stole the identities of at least 50 state prison inmates while in the employ of the Mississippi Department of Corrections, to further her

money brought in by legalized gambling is just too sweet to care about the individuals and families destroyed in the process — but what of the many other innocent victims of the many other schemes to steal money for legalized gambling?

While it's normally difficult to sympathize with prison inmates, we should take into account that Singleton took advantage of a group of people who were vulnerable and helpless to protect themselves from her. As if they don't have enough problems, they will now be released back into society when their sentences are served with one more complication: identity theft. There could also be additional victims if Singleton's scheme carried over into the tax preparation business.

Then there's the odd situation of the government — that's us, by the way — legalizing the very activity that led to the government punishing Singleton so severely. The government offers the temptation and then penalizes people for taking advantage of the temptation. The government promotes the addiction, and then slaps people down when they go too far.

Does this make sense? That's a good question to ask the politicians who got us into this mess. They're running for election and reelection this year. Don't accept the platitudes and dodgy answers for which they are so famous these days. When they next want your vote, let them know your support hinges on their position on legalized gambling. They work for us, after all, even if some of them believe the opposite is true.

As long as we excuse legalized gambling and allow its corruption to flourish at such great cost, there will be many more Janice Singletons in our future. The next tragedy could be your father or mother, son or daughter.

Think about it.

GUEST OPINION:

Get ready for tablet world

By Aaron Linne
Nashville

and give a video update on how things are going.

Easier access to text resources

Missionaries can't afford to ship their entire library overseas, but they can bring along a slim device that carries \$5,000 worth of commentaries downloaded on it. Tablets create a better reading experience than either a phone or a computer screen.

Holding a tablet feels like holding a book. Tablets will be the natural method of reading for the rising generation.

Face to face conversations

The iPad 2 ships with a front-facing camera, as do most Android tablets. The tablet is just the right size to fill the screen with a friend's head, and have them feel like they are there in the room with you.

With software like FaceTime, missionaries will be able to easily call to their home church on a Sunday morning over WiFi

Your pastor may not need an office

That's what we do with our pastor at Mosaic Nashville. We've never rented office space for our pastor. Instead, he goes to different coffee shops each day to meet with different people and be a part of the local community. There are only four things that tie a pastor to an office: their computer (it's portable now via the tablet), their library (it's in the tablet), knowing where the pastor will be (now broadcast via Twitter and Facebook), and privacy.

As tablets become more available in more flavors, there are going to be feature sets and price points that exactly match your ministry's needs. The goal of a computer on every desk will be quickly forgotten, just as the art of handwriting begins its exit as well.

So, have you picked up a tablet lately?

Owning your church's app

Web browsers and online sites will catch up to the abilities of tablet apps (like we're seeing with HTML5), then tablets will improve and the flow will go back to apps being more advanced than browsers.

Linne is executive producer of digital marketing for the B&H Publishing Group of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, headquartered in Nashville. He writes a monthly technology column for Baptist Press.

'Prosperity gospel' ruining true witness

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — A dangerous "egocentric gospel" that omits Jesus, neglects the cross, and instead promises health and wealth is being promoted by some of America's most well-known preachers today.

That's the conclusion of two seminary professors whose new book, *Health, Wealth & Happiness* (Kregel), critiques what is often called the prosperity or health & wealth gospel — the claim by some of America's most well-known preachers that God desires all Christians to be materially wealthy and physically healthy.

BP: One question people might have is: Are you saying that God no longer heals and that God does not want to bless His people?

Jones: That's a very common question. We don't want people to over-learn the lesson that we're trying to teach in the book. Of course, God still does bless His people, but what it boils down to is this: What is being rich? Is it wealth, having a lot of money, a sports car and a trophy wife? Or is wealth being content with whatever it is that we have? I have five kids and I have a teacher's salary, and so I don't have much but I feel like I am an incredibly wealthy man. So God does want to bless us, but we need to define blessing on God's terms and not on materialistic man-centered terms.

One study quoted in the book found that 50 of the 260 largest churches in America promote the prosperity gospel.

"If Christianity is supposed to be about God and His glory and is supposed to be about Christ, and we're making it about us — that's the worst thing we could do," one of the authors, David W. Jones, told Baptist Press. Jones is associate professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. "It is so catering to the flesh and it so exalts man that it gets to the point where you obscure Christ."

The prosperity gospel, Jones says, is a "pagan teaching with a Christian face."

The book, co-authored with Russell W. Woodbridge, a missionary in Eastern Europe who is an adjunct professor at Southeastern Seminary, gives the history of the prosperity gospel movement, interacts with quotes from some of the most well-known prosperity gospel preachers, and ends by giving a "corrective" — that is, an explanation of the historical, biblical teaching on suffering, wealth, poverty, and giving.

BP: In terms of how the prosperity gospel has spread, what role has TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network) played?

Jones: First of all, there's a distorted view of God — God is sort of like a cosmic bellhop that we can call upon and He's there to serve us as opposed to us being here to serve Him. No. 2, there's an exalted view of man — [it teaches that] Christianity is ultimately about us and not about Jesus and God's glory. No. 3, there's this idea of mind over

matter — if you just believe it, it will come true. No. 4, there is an overall fixation upon health and wealth and the idea that if you're just a good person and you love Jesus and tithe, you can expect to have a full wallet and perfect health. No. 5, there is a false idea of salvation itself. [According to the prosperity gospel,] it's not so much that we're saved from eternal damnation, saved from God's wrath, but rather we're saved from the unfulfilling, unprosperous life.

BP: What are some of the basic biblical or theological errors of the prosperity gospel?

Jones: First of all, there's a distorted view of God — God is sort of like a cosmic bellhop that we can call upon and He's there to serve us as opposed to us being here to serve Him. No. 2, there's an exalted view of man — [it teaches that] Christianity is ultimately about us and not about Jesus and God's glory. No. 3, there's this idea of mind over

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BP: Why has the prosperity gospel grown when, as you argue in the book, its teachings are overtly unbiblical and contrary to historical Christianity?

Jones: It caters to the fallen human flesh. All of us want Christianity to be about us, and we want to focus upon our own wants and desires and needs. And since our heart is already bent that way, when the prosperity gospel comes along and says, "Christianity is about you, and if you just believe in Jesus you'll be healthy, wealthy and wise," that just resonates with our fallen flesh. People are already primed to hear that message — especially those in our churches that don't know much of their Bibles.

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YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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Clue: F = D

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Proverbs ten: Thirteen

JUST FOR THE RECORD

1. Antioch Church, Union, is hosting a fall family fun festival Oct. 29, 4 - 8 p.m., including Christian clown performance, trunk or treat, carnival games, fellowship meal, cakewalk, LoveNow Band, and hayride. Free.
2. Ebenezer Church, Lexington, is dedicating their new worship center on homecoming day Oct. 9. Services, 10 a.m., with a DVD showing the construction of the new building; worship, 10:30 a.m.; dedication and prayer, 11 a.m., followed by meal. Lynn Nations, Jay Westbrooks, speakers; Skipper Maxwell, music.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

and they stand ready to help you not only to understand but to help others to do likewise. This is a big, big deal!

Do you remember when we collected 50 million pennies and they sat on the corner of the Baptist Building property as a silent witness to each of the children whose lives had been cut short by abortion since Roe v. Wade and the Supreme Court decision allowing legalized abortions? That number continues to escalate far past 50 million. The argument that is made in the sterile courtroom setting has to do with whether or not a person is a person until they have viable life outside of the womb. We now know scientifically that this is a viable human being inside the womb.

Just think about it! If a small sample of tissue was taken from that newly developing embryo, the DNA would show a distinct, one of a kind, human being that was growing. It would be same DNA if a sample was taken at birth, and it would be the same DNA on the day that this child starts to the first grade. The same DNA would be matched up on the day they finish college. If they live to be of a ripe old age, you got it: this

same identifying DNA would be present. So I encourage each of you to thoughtfully help others to understand that it is important for us to express ourselves by voting YES on Amendment 26.

Second is to visualize. Just look at the significance of what we are doing. I am not sure that we have ever had and certainly not in my lifetime been presented with the possibility of making a decision that will have ramifications reaching across our nation. It is a life protecting position, and it is a biblical position. One person said to me that the national media is going to beat us up and they will not agree with us on this position. I doubt that they will, but how many times have you disagreed with their positions and did not have the opportunity to do or say anything about it? In this vote, you have a say. You can make a difference!

While it is an important cultural decision, I would ask you

to look closer and visualize the reality that if we would just do it, Mississippi Baptists can go to the polls, vote YES, and almost single handedly make the right decision.

Third — go vote! While I want you to talk about it and I want you to see the possible impact from it, nothing will matter if you do not vote. While I would encourage you to go to the polls and vote for the candidates that you feel would be best for your community and state, I would not even begin to think about telling you for whom to vote, but on this issue, because its roots sink deep into the fabric of who we are as a people, I would ask you to go and be supportive at the polls. You may hear that it will be contested in the courts and that may be true. You may also hear that it will be ruled unconstitutional and that remains to be seen. What will be true is that we will have done the right thing and even equally as important we will have provided the inspiration and the encouragement for other states to possibly rise up and take the same action. One thing is for sure: if we do nothing, we will miss a choice opportunity for making a decision that will reverberate all across our land. Vote YES on Amendment 26.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

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of the movie we gave an appeal, among other things, to ask them if they'd make the commitment to be a godly father, to be a godly husband of integrity, and to commit their lives to serve the Lord. We wanted to give them a copy of the resolution that was presented in the movie, free of charge. We're going to show it again this Saturday and we anticipate an even bigger crowd.

"After a couple of weeks of not hearing anything, I got Tom Crocker from LifeWay to make a call, and within a few minutes I had a lady from Provident Films call me. We have a small community and small theaters, so I had to try to convince her as to why we should have it. I told her that the pastor of Sherwood Church, Michael Catt, is from Jackson County and grew up in Pascagoula. She told me, 'I'll fight with Sony (the distributor) to get it here.'

"The opening scene was really gripping. The carjacking really sucked me in, and it put you on the edge of your seat. There were parts of the movie that were really funny. At the same time, it was deeply moving and sad, and the movie did a really good job with getting you involved with Adam [the main character] and his wife."

Hazzard pointed out that the Gospel was clearly presented during the course of the movie. He saw Courageous at Nelco theaters in Greenville, and "the only seats not filled were the ones on the very front row."

Some pastors and churches

promoted the film in unique ways. David Aultman, pastor of First Church, Gautier, said,

"About two months ago, I realized the movie was coming and not many people in our community knew about it or were talking about it. It wasn't going to be shown in Jackson County. I got on the Courageous website and signed up to be an Action Squad Leader."

Hollywood insiders closely watch per-screen income as an indication of a movie's financial health. Courageous opened on 1,161 screens nationwide and averaged \$7,806 per screen. By way of comparison, Dolphin Tale played on 3,515 screens in the same time period but averaged only \$3,958 per screen.

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. Corinth Church, Singleton: Homecoming, Oct. 9; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Ross Holleyman, speaker; John Sharp, pastor.
2. McAdams Church, Sallis: Homecoming, Oct. 9; services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; John Robert Ballard, speaker; James Young, pastor.
3. Siloam Church, West Point: Homecoming, Oct. 9, 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch; Joe Senter, speaker; William Tiffin, music.
4. Spring Hill Church, Hazlehurst: Revival, Oct. 9 - 12; Sun., 11 a.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Stan Weatherford, speaker; Joel Haire, pastor.
5. Hope Church, Philadelphia: Revival, Oct. 9 - 12; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; James Young, speaker; Faye and Reuben Moore, music; Dennis Duval, pastor.
6. Holly Springs Church, Foxworth: Homecoming, Oct. 9; services, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and singing, 1:30 p.m.; Kevin Crozier, speaker; The Lees and other guests, music; Ron Jordan, pastor.
7. County Line Church, Crystal Springs: Revival, Oct. 10 - 13, 7 p.m.; Tyson Windom and Jerry Mixon, speakers.
8. Linwood Church, Union: Homecoming, Oct. 9; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Gary Johnson, speaker.
9. Providence Church, Grenada: Revival, Oct. 9 - 12; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Kevin Jackson, speaker.
10. First Church, Burnsville: 175th anniversary, Oct. 9, 2 p.m., followed by reception; Stanley Magill, speaker; Martha Magill, music.
11. Paynes Church, Tallahatchie County: Revival, Oct. 9 - 12; Sun., 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Lawrence Runnels, speaker; Sherry Irons, music; Eugene Dobbs, pastor.
12. McCool Church, Attala Association: Homecoming and 125th anniversary, Oct. 9; services, 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch and special music.
13. Franklin Church, Flora: Revival, Oct. 9 - 12; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Billy Smith, speaker; David Westbrook and Ronnie Parker, music.
14. Ackerman Church, Ackerman: Revival, Oct. 9 - 12; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Bob Irvin, speaker; Chris Jenkins, music; Danny Irvin, pastor.
15. Immanuel Church, Greenwood: Annual day, Oct. 9; service, 10:30 a.m. followed by potluck dinner; John Shackelford, speaker.
16. North Calvary Church, Philadelphia: Homecoming, Oct. 9 - 12; Sun., 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Lawrence Runnels, speaker; Sherry Irons, music; Eugene Dobbs, pastor.
17. Mesa Church, Tylertown: 100th anniversary, Oct. 8 - 9; Sat., church picnic, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Sun., services, 10 a.m., with a time of remembering, followed by covered dish lunch; Tommy King, pastor.
18. Harmony Church, Lincoln: Homecoming, Oct. 9; worship, 10 a.m.; singing, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Larry Eikenloff, speaker; Southern Praise, music; Owen King, pastor.
19. Mt. Vernon Church, Liberty Association: Revival; Oct. 7 - 9; Fri. - Sat., 6 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Rick Kennedy, speaker; Glen Gatlin, music; Jerry Causey, pastor.
20. Bay Springs Church, Oxford: 175th anniversary and homecoming, Oct. 16; worship, 10 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and music by the Bluff City Quartet and the Lost Tyme Blue Grass Gospel Singers; Paul Brown, speaker; Baptist Historical Commission will present 175th anniversary certificate.
21. River Bend Church, Monroe Association: Revival, Oct. 9 - 12; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Mickey Dalrymple, speaker; R.L. and Beth Sigrest, worship leaders; Roy McHenry, pastor.
22. Clear Branch Church, Florence: Homecoming, Oct. 9; services, 19:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Wiley Reid, speaker; Jonathan Sherwin, pastor.

today. Across the board, many men aren't fulfilling the role of father like they might have in past generations. The movie has a lot to say about the family unit and about what God expects from the family model.

"My mother is on her fourth marriage, and I never really had a father in my life, so for me it was encouraging to see different scenarios of how people deal in situations where there isn't a father. I've seen two or three of those scenarios play out in my own life. I never really had a relationship with my biological father, and there never was anyone else my mother married to step up and fulfill that role in my life, so it was encouraging to me and maybe would be to other families."

"As a father of a nine-year-old son, it really touches me to think of how important it is to protect our families," said Philip Price, associational missions director for Jackson County Association. "You have a movie where you have these police officers risking their lives for their communities, but they aren't necessarily protecting their families. You have to ask, 'what's really important in the end?'

"We do a lot of good things, but we're called to be right in the center of God's perfect will for our lives. God has called us to be more than just good."

Editor's note: For more information on *Courageous*, visit www.courageousthemovie.com.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

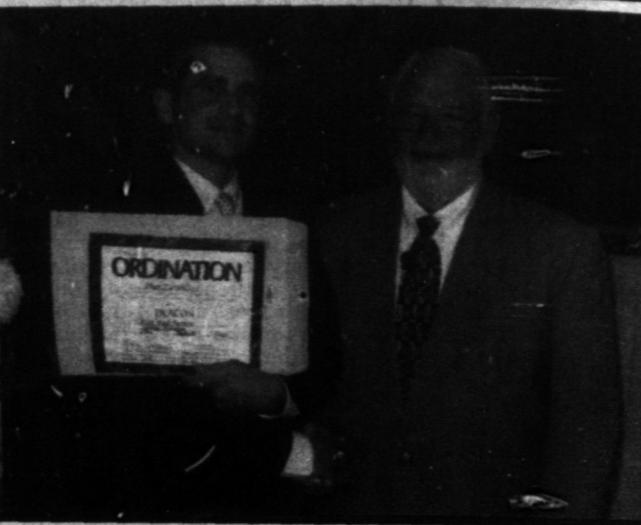


MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

- First Church, Jackson, recently formed Cornerstone Choir, directed by Eva Hart (seated). Leadership team, shown, includes Taylor and Catherine Sledge, Barbara Hutchins, Emily Agent, Deborah Bolen, and Christopher Weeks. The choir is made up of 10th-12th graders.



1. First Church, Jackson



5. Dees ordination



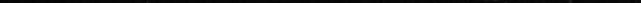
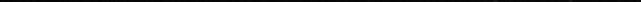
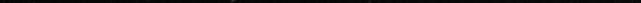
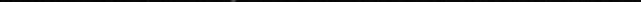
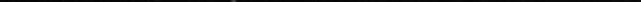
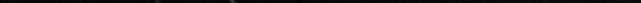
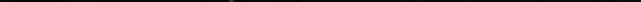
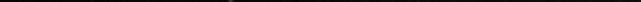
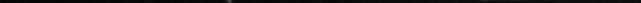
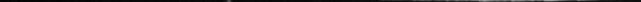
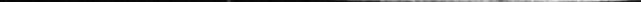
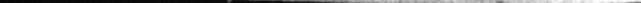
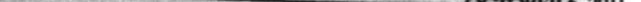
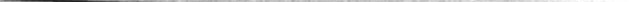
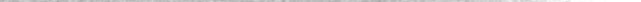
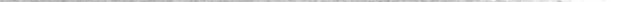
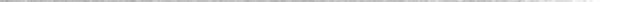
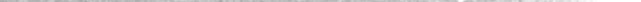
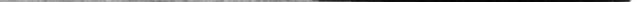
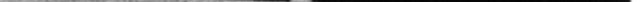
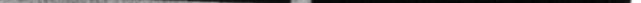
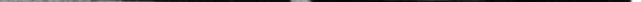
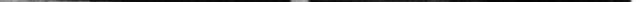
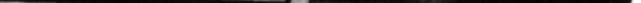
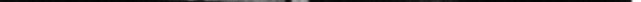
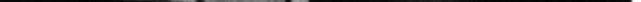
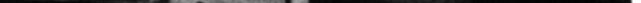
- Topeka Church, Jayess, ordained Maurice Rutland as deacon Sept. 18. Shown are pastor Dale Authement, Rutland, wife Wendy, daughter Gracie, and son, Jonah.



6. Handsboro Church, Gulfport



7. Davis ordination



Iran adds new charges in campaign to execute pastor

WASHINGTON (BP) — Pressure on Iran continues to build for the release of Christian pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, who is facing a death sentence as the U.S. State Department issued its first statement and a leading religious liberty organization urged Christians worldwide to contact Iran's United Nations ambassador.

In the meantime, the capital charge of "apostasy from Islam" that Nadarkhani faces has been upgraded to include allegations of rape, extortion, and national security, CNN reported on Saturday. Critics of the radical Islamic theocracy ruling Iran have accused the government of adding the charges to bolster their case for executing Nadarkhani.

The pastor refused to recant Christianity four times last week and could be executed any day for his faith.

A court sentenced him to death because his parents are Muslim and he is a Christian. Iranians born into



Nadarkhani

the Muslim faith are prohibited from converting to any other religion, under threat of death.

The State Department issued a statement that mentions Nadarkhani and says the United States remains "deeply concerned by reports

of the Iranian government's continued repression of its people." The statement also says the department remains "particularly concerned" about the pastor.

"Throughout his imprisonment, [Nadarkhani] has trusted in the Lord and has been a bold witness of the redeeming work of Christ in his life," ICC said in a statement, adding that the pastor "has learned to delight in hardships and persecution for Christ's sake (2 Cor. 12:10)."

Meanwhile, Iran's Fars News Agency reported Friday that

Nadarkhani was to be put to death for rape and extortion — charges not present in any previous court document since his 2009 arrest, CNN reported. Nadarkhani defenders have embarrassed the government by pointing out that Iran does not have a law defining apostasy as a capital offense.

Religious liberty experts immediately defended Nadarkhani, calling the charges false. "They are feeling the

attention, they are feeling the weight of the eyes of the world watching how they are treating this man," Todd Nettleton, spokesman for Voice of the Martyrs, told CNN. "I am dumbfounded, though, that at this stage in the game this is what they would trot out."

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, another religious liberty group, sent out a Tweet saying that it has "court documents that are very specific" in charging the pastor only with apostasy.

Nadarkhani's refusal to recant has inspired Christians worldwide. The American Center for Law and Justice reported one of Nadarkhani's court exchanges: "Repent means to return. What should I return to? To the blasphemy that I had before my faith in Christ?" he asked.

"To the religion of your ancestors, Islam," the judge reportedly replied. "I cannot," Nadarkhani responded.

Obama administration clears same sex marriages for military bases

WASHINGTON (BP) — Same sex marriage ceremonies may be conducted on military bases by military chaplains, the Pentagon announced in a controversial decision Sept. 30. Critics said the new policy violates the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defines marriage in federal law as being only between a man and a woman.

The Department of Defense (DOD) made clear the policy for its chaplains and facilities only 10 days after its ban on open homosexuality in the military was officially lifted. The Pentagon provided the guidance in two memos.

A Sept. 30 memo said a chaplain may participate in a private wedding at or away from a military installation if such a ceremony is legal at the state or local level. A chaplain is not required to take part in a private ceremony if doing so would conflict with his or her "religion or personal beliefs," according to the guidance.

The memo also says a chaplain's participation does not amount to a DOD endorsement of the ceremony. Although the memo does not specifically mention same sex marriage, it

makes clear its issuance came in response to the repeal of the ban on open homosexuality.

In a Sept. 21 memo announced at the same time, the Pentagon said decisions about the use of military facilities for private occasions "should be made on a sexual-orientation neutral basis, provided such use is not prohibited by applicable state and local laws," the American Forces Press Service reported.

"It is outrageous that only 10 days after repeal of the law against homosexuality in the Armed Forces, the Defense Department is already pushing the military further down the slippery slope," said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, in a written statement.

Tony Perkins is not related to William Perkins, editor of The Baptist Record.

"The repeal law passed by the lame-duck Congress last year said nothing about authorizing same-sex weddings on military bases or by military chaplains. DOMA remains the law in America, defining marriage as a union of one man and one woman for all purposes under federal law," said Perkins, who called on the White House "to end its multi-front attack upon marriage."

Opponents of DOMA applauded the decisions.

There are many chaplains in the military who simply do not believe that gay and lesbian servicemembers are second-class citizens, and those chaplains should have the freedom to practice their religion as they see fit, including officiating at ceremonies that their denominations recognize," said Alex Nicholson, executive director of Servicemembers United, according to the Washington Blade, a leading newspaper for homosexuals.

Mark Tidd said he was suspending his authorization for Navy chaplains to perform same-sex marriages violates DOMA, which is still the law of the land and binds our military, including chaplains," he wrote.

DOMA, which was signed into law by President Clinton in 1996, not only defines marriage in federal law as being between a man and a woman, but it empowers states to refuse to recognize another state's same sex marriages.

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Bible readers lay out preferences in Lifeway survey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Most American Bible readers prefer word-for-word translations of the original Greek and Hebrew over thought-for-thought translations, saying they value accuracy over readability, according to a new LifeWay Research study.

"It is interesting to note that Bible sales do not necessarily follow these preferences," said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. "Those reading the Bible each month represent only a portion of all Bible purchasers."

Bible readers can share their preferences for different translation principles but may not be aware of which characteristics are present in specific translations — even the ones that they own.

When asked whether they prefer "word-for-word" translations, where the original words are translated as exactly as possible, or "thought-for-thought" translations, where the translators attempt to reproduce the intent of the original thought rather than translating the exact words, 61% chose word-for-word.

Respondents hold a variety of opinions regarding the style of language they prefer in a Bible translation for personal reading. Among them:

- 68% want language to be simpler to understand while seven percent want it to be more difficult to understand.

- 81% say it should be more enjoyable to read while four percent prefer it to be more of a chore to read.

- 27% favor contemporary language while 46% want traditional language.

- 36% want more modern language while 37% favor more old-fashioned language.

- 19% feel understanding the language should require a higher level of education while 49% say it should not require a higher level of education.

- 63% believe it should be simple for anyone to understand while 14% say the language should be meant more for people who have a lot of experience with the Bible.

- 40% prefer more formal language while 26% say it should be more informal.

- 22% want language more for casual reading while 44% say it should be designed more for in-depth study.

- 75% of Bible readers prefer a translation with "total accuracy."

- 82% of Bible readers prefer a literal translation of masculine words.

- 89% of Bible readers prefer a translation with gender-specific references to God.

Lifeway Research

cent strongly prefer it. Six percent are not sure.

Bible readers are even more adamant about not making references to God as "father" in the Greek and Hebrew. Some translators face relatives to references to God as "father" while others think they should be translated into gender-inclusive terms such as "parent." Do you prefer the literal or more gender-inclusive?

They were told, "Another issue Bible translators face relates to references to God as 'father' in the Greek and Hebrew. Some translators face relatives to references to God as 'father' while others think they should be translated into gender-inclusive terms such as 'parent.' Do you prefer the literal or more gender-inclusive?"

In response, 89% want a literal translation of gender-specific references to God, including 68% who strongly prefer literal translation and 21% who somewhat prefer literal translation. Five percent somewhat prefer gender-inclusive translation, and two percent strongly prefer gender-inclusive translation. Four percent are not sure.

The places in the Bible in which the inspired writers used masculine words for God, a large majority of Bible readers want translators to use masculine words as well," McConnell noted. "This is true regardless of whether the reader describes their own spiritual beliefs as liberal or conservative."

Methodology: The LifeWay Research survey was conducted in August 2011 via online panel. A representative sample of U.S. adult population was invited to participate. Two thousand people who read the Bible once a month or more qualified for the study. Only people who read the Bible personally (outside of group activities) or as part of a family activity were included. The sample of 2,000 provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed +2.2%.

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ARLINGTON HEIGHTS PASTOR BEN CARLISLE RETIRING
Arlington Heights Baptist Church will host a reception for Reverend and Mrs. Ben Carlisle on Sunday, October 9, 2011, at 3:00 pm in the church's Fellowship Hall for the purpose of honoring him upon his retirement as pastor of Arlington Heights. The church cordially invites family, friends, and church members to celebrate this occasion with us.

Bro. Ben has faithfully served as a minister for 42 years with his last 25 years at Arlington Heights Baptist Church, Pascagoula. He also served the following churches in the state of Mississippi: Bethany Baptist Church, Bay Springs; Calhoun Baptist Church, Taylorsville; Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Mt. Olive; and Woodville Baptist Church, Woodville. In addition, he served on various associational committees during his pastorates including budget committee, operational committee, and mission project coordinator where he served as moderator. Bro. Ben served two terms on the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board as secretary, as well as on the board's Executive committee as secretary, and on the program committee. He was also on the Board of Trustees for William Carey University serving for two terms including one term as chairman.

Bro. Ben and his wife Etta have been married 41 years and are the parents of three daughters, Christi (Steven) Donald, Mary Kathryn Carlisle, Karen (Justin) Graham and granddaughter Amelia. Bro. Ben loves working with people and sharing Christ daily.



THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director
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(601) 922-2242
www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

AUGUST 2011

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Larry & Betty Rich
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Mr. & Mrs. C. Gene Cryder
Mr. Scott Fulcher
Mr. & Mrs. Darry Crowell
& Lindsey
Geneva Gardner
Mr. Bobby C. Gardner
Katie Garner
Jimmy & Jo Jenkins
Buford & Rudy Griffith
Mrs. Nell Garrett
Dr. & Mrs. John K. Perry
Claudia Garrison
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Mr. & Mrs. Larry Benson

A Baptist Children's Village resident has received the inaugural Tessie Morgan Garner Scholarship awarded by the Southern Baptist Women's Missionary Union Foundation in Birmingham, Alabama. This scholarship was established to provide for a deserving female resident of The Baptist Children's Village. The recipients are determined by the WMU Foundation Board of Trustees along with the Scholarship Committee of The Baptist Children's Village. The WMU Foundation has over 20 scholarship and grants available for students all across the world. In 2011, the Foundation awarded more than 70 students scholarships and grants totaling over \$49,500. Funds from the Garner Scholarship will allow this BCV resident to complete her education at Blue Mountain College.

Jr. Boy Goodin

Bobby & Ann Moody

Wendy Carol Goodman

Mr. & Mrs. James Sanders

Jimmy Grace

Charles & Wanda

Chrestman

Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Grady

Mrs. Louise D. Williams

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Bill & Deena Barbee

Teeney Barbee

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Ada Haddock

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Evelyn Hanna

Mrs. Janeiro L. Cranage

Mr. Steve Harden

Gerald & Patricia

Hasselman

Mr. Paul Harper

Richard & Cathy New

James Harrell

Mrs. Evelyn H. Vaughn

John Harris

Wallace & Carol Clay

Cory Wallace Hart

Barney & Paula Albritton

Mr. Jimmie Hart

Gerald & Patricia

Hasselman

Carr Haskins

Mr. Kirk Haskins

Susan Haskins

Mr. Kirk Haskins

Anita Hatcher

Bobby & Ann Moody

Emma Grace Hayes

Mrs. Martha Moore

Rusty Henderson

Arthur & Alicia P. Burnett

Andy & Genny Cochran

Mr. & Mrs. Hubert T.

Kendrick

Bill Hewitt

Mrs. Betty Jo Hewitt

Mr. Amos Hite

Mr. & Mrs. James C. Brents

Jr.

Betty Holloway

Mr. & Mrs. Gary E.

Weathersby

Mrs. Frances Howard

Ruth SSC, Macedonia BC,

Mendenhall

Ron & Betty Bennett

Philip & Era Lee Hilton

The Jesse L. Craft Family

Frances P. Frazier

Mrs. Edwin B. King

Lettie French

Mrs. Janeiro L. Cranage

Mr. Paul Fugate

Mr. & Mrs. C. Gene Cryder

Mr. Scott Fulcher

Mr. & Mrs. Darry Crowell

& Lindsey

Geneva Gardner

Mr. Bobby C. Gardner

Katie Garner

Jimmy & Jo Jenkins

Buford & Rudy Griffith

Mrs. Nell Garrett

Dr. & Mrs. John K. Perry

Claudia Garrison

Jimmy & Jo Jenkins

James W. Jones

Mims & Susan Berry

Louis Jones

Wilber & Nancy Shell

Ms. Pam Jones

Richard & Cathy New

Terry "Tan" Jones

Garry & Ann Austin

Mrs. Candace Jordan

Jack & Bonnie Knight

Alan Keating

Will & Jean Polk

George Kelly

Ralph & Sadie Carroll

Becky Kerut

Mrs. Melanie Mendrop

Amette King

Mrs. Barbara B. Easterling

Diane King

Mrs. Lynda L. Allen

Keith & Kathy Buchanan

Roy & Juanita Cotton

Dr. & Mrs. Karl B. Horn

Mrs. Evelyn H. Vaughn

Ed & Falba Walker

Myrtilla Burns Kirk

Ed & Clarke Goodwin

Mr. & Mrs. William T.

Lipssey Jr.

Terrel Landrum

Mr. & Mrs. R. N.

Humphreys

Larry Larkin

Daniel & Dianne Smith

Ruth Lawrence

Mrs. Bea Greer

Mrs. Dora Murray

Charlie Leach

Mr. & Mrs. A. J. Davis

Earl & Pearl Millaps

Mrs. Ann D. Millaps

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Buford

Ellen, John, Jordan &

Brandon Dockery

Chester Holley

Calvin Stodghill

Joe Howard Minton

Branch BC, Morton

Mr. Bangor Moss

Alfred & Billye Ann

Barfield

Mr. & Mrs. J. B. Hadens

Patty & Beth Sullender

Mrs. Mary Lott

Charles & Pat Muscio

Mrs. Margie Malpass

Joe & Doris Doss

Gerald & Patricia

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Youth experts: film 'made with a bias and agenda'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Divided, a film about a young man's search for why so many in his generation are abandoning Christianity, is generating discussion about the merits of age-segregated youth ministry versus family integrated churches.

The 54-minute film, available for viewing online at dividedthemovie.com, follows Philip Leclerc as he interviews youth and youth ministry experts and concludes that modern youth ministry is founded on the ideas of men rather than the Word of God.

Youth ministry expert Walt Mueller, however, characterized the film as one "conceived and made with a bias and agenda that existed long before the first clip was ever shot," and he said Divided is "not so much a documentary as it is a promotional piece for the National Center for Family Integrated Churches (NCFIC)."

Allen Jackson, professor of youth and collegiate ministry at New Orleans Seminary, also expressed concern, stating, "I do not agree with the conclusions, the logic, or even the biblical rationale that led to the conclusions."

Richard Ross, professor of student ministry at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, said ending all church ministries to children and teenagers is not the solution.

Divided has caused such a stir in the blogosphere that the organizers of a major youth ministry gathering, the D6 Conference, disinvited the NCFIC from being an exhibitor during its Sept. 21-23 sessions in Dallas.

Divided posits that age-segregated youth ministry can be blamed for the exodus of young adults from churches. The solution, according to the film, is a church experience where all ages study and worship together.

"The whole point of Divided is that the Bible can be trusted for the way we disciple youth," the film's website says. "The age segregated world that now dominates modern church life is only one of the many effects of rejecting the Lord and the authority of His Word. It is one problem that stands among many others. However, we believe this is a critical issue because the gospel is not being preached to youth in the way

that God has prescribed. We have sidestepped His methods and preferred our own."

"While the only explicit kind of worship, discipleship, celebration and instruction in the Bible is either in the family or is age integrated in the church, we have chosen the opposite."

A Weed in the Church by Scott T. Brown, NCFIC director of the National Center for

and gather them into the corporate meetings of the church."

Jackson said his first inclination was to ignore the film. "I was aware that a movie had been made that was an extension of a movement that seemed on the surface to be very anti-youth ministry. In fact, the movie Divided and Scott Brown's companion book A Weed in the Church seem to

Ross offered suggestions:

- Every church should call a student minister who is committed to seeing parents take their biblical role as primary spiritual leaders of their children (and when possible, as spiritual leaders to children whose parents are lost) and who will build his ministry plan around this central principle.

parents to design and implement a healthy youth ministry.

Mueller, founder and president of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding, acknowledged that when he agreed to be interviewed for Divided he didn't grasp the intention of Leclerc and his brother Chris, co-owners of a Wisconsin film company.

The film addresses issues that need to be addressed in some youth ministries, Mueller said, such as a lack of depth, a reliance on fun and games, and an eagerness to supplant the biblical design for parental nurturing of children.

"In fact, these criticisms that are leveled from 'outside' the youth ministry world by NCFIC are many of the very same criticisms that loads of us have been working diligently, prayerfully and biblically to address from within for decades," Mueller, author of eight books pertaining to youth culture, wrote at learningmyline.blogspot.com in July. "It troubles

me that none of that was ever included with any depth or honesty."

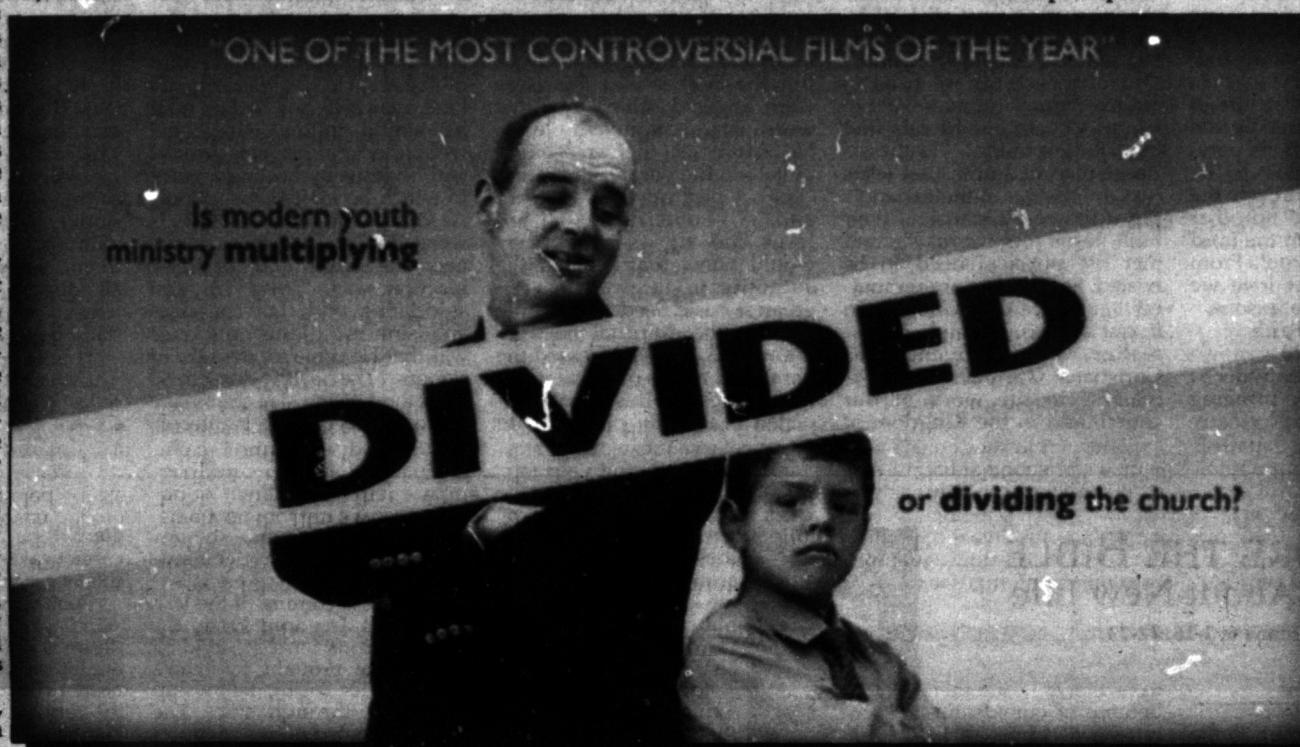
Every church should call a student minister who is committed to seeing students folded into the life of the congregation, functioning as full laity and living in rich relationships with all the generations of the church.

No church should permit practices contrary to Scripture to creep into the student ministry of the church, no matter how noble the motivation such as increasing attendance or attracting unbelievers.

Existing student ministers who do not understand the biblical role of parents, who think teenagers need to experience student ministry cut off from the rest of the congregation or who think the end justifies the means in terms of unbiblical practices need to work with their pastors on a clear plan for continuing education or need to seek other employment.

At times, the best way to accomplish the mission of the church is for teenagers to function with their parents. Other times, the best way is for groups of teenagers to function under godly, biblical church leaders.

Churches not in a position to have a youth minister should enlist adults as a youth team who will agree to partner with



Family Integrated Churches, is presented as a companion book to Divided and is quoted extensively on the film's website. The book suggests that while Scripture defines and encourages youth discipleship, the premises of modern youth ministry are at odds with biblical teaching and must be reformed.

"Can you imagine a more unstable subgroup in which to put youth than with a group of peers? In contrast, can you imagine a more stable or life-giving subgroup than a well-functioning church?" Brown writes.

"Think of the impact of a God-centered home in which a husband and wife are functioning biblically. The relationships there depict the Gospel: husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the Church; wives submitting to their husbands as the church submits to Christ; and children, who have a genuine love for Christ, displaying honor and obedience to their parents. A God-centered home is a powerful force for evangelism," Brown writes.

"God has delivered to us a pattern for reaching youth who have no parents," Brown also writes. "It is to preach the Gospel to them when we go about the community, fold them into individual families, connect them with diverse relationships in the body of Christ,

suggest youth ministry has outlived its usefulness.

"It would be fair to assume that I am responding to a movement that would seemingly render the training of youth ministers as irrelevant as a job security kind of thing, but I hope it doesn't come across that way. I feel like the premise of the movie, though overstated, is valid. Discipleship belongs in the family, but that is not new."

Every credible voice in youth ministry for the past 15 years has pointed to the need to involve parents in the ministry to students, Jackson said, noting books such as Family Based Youth Ministry, Soul Searching, and Rethink.

Divided has some good points, Jackson reiterated. "It raises important issues and causes great questions to be asked. Pastors, youth ministers and church leaders need to address the urgent need to disciple the parents who need to disciple the students. The crisis raised is one of mature adults (fathers, mothers, church leaders) who will be the authentic models that the emerging generation craves."

Jackson believes the way forward is to focus on "challenging and equipping families to raise up disciples and to challenge youth ministries to create environments where biblical teaching is central and Christlike friendships are nurtured."